

Endless Summer III

"Equipping Christian Healthcare Students for a Lifelong Ministry in Medicine"

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What Are Your Vital Signs?

Within the medical field, a patient's temperature, pulse, respiration, and blood pressure are considered the fundamental indices for the presence of life. Christianity calls this belief into question. Those who have yet to accept Jesus Christ have neither tasted the Living Water or experienced the abundant life that He offers. Indeed, many of the individuals we encounter may be physically alive but may have never experienced spiritual life. Nevertheless, the spiritual dimension of patient care is often avoided by doctors and nurses, since many assume that it is the role of a chaplain or religious person to administer spiritual care. In light of Matthew 28:19-20, this belief, though widely held, is both erroneous and detrimental.

As healthcare professionals, we will have the unique opportunity to provide care for both the physically and spiritually sick by sharing, reflecting, and working in the love of Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility to make the most of this God-given opportunity, and this year's METS (Medical Evangelism Training Strategies) and summer project provided strategies for doing so.



Nancy and Drew gain patient experience.

Summer Project Equips Inadequate Healthcare Students

Having served as an inner-city missionary in New Orleans for an entire year, I had repeatedly witnessed the incredible power of God as He worked in the lives of individuals in our impoverished, drug-ravaged, and crime-ridden community. Numerous people gave their lives to Christ and the Word was received readily by both young and old alike. Given these experiences, I entered medical school with a heady, conquer-all attitude; I was burning with a desire to share the Gospel with whomever I encountered. I especially felt a burden for my fellow classmates. By the end of the year, the burden for my classmates remained, the burning desire to share the Gospel remained, but I felt as if I had had the living daylight's pounded out of me—the conquer-all attitude all but vanished. Never in my life had I encountered such opposition to Christianity—not only on the faces of my classmates but also embedded in the comments of the professors and the physicians with whom I worked. As a Christian, I felt that they rejected me as a narrow-minded bigot. How would I even begin to share the Gospel in such a hostile climate? I was disheartened and discouraged, to say the least, but I continued to earnestly seek God's counsel on the subject. He sent me to the METS project.

Upon hearing the first speakers at the conference, I realized that God was laying before me the tools needed to reach my fellow classmates, medical professors, physicians, and future patients. I felt a huge sense of relief as I learned that all I had to do was follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He led me to "ripe fruit"—people ready to hear and



Some of the girls of the project, on their way to visit patients at a local hospital.

receive the truth of the Gospel. No prodding, persuasive words, or cajoling was necessary on my part; I just needed a heart open to God. The METS solution was an answer to my prayers.

Other project participants share similar experiences. Tsovic Arutyunyan, a second-year student, indicated that her desire to ethically and effectively share her faith with patients is what drew her to the METS program. According to Tsovic, the project has helped to strengthen her personal relationship with Jesus Christ and has given her a greater passion and confidence for sharing the Gospel.

While completing her nursing clinical rotations, Nicole Romney encountered numerous patients whom she perceived to be in spiritual crisis. Nevertheless, she did not deem herself competent or confident enough to provide spiritual care. She felt that coming to METS would prepare and equip her to do that which she desired most—to spread the love of Jesus Christ on the wards.

Representing 29 schools, 21 states, and 2 countries, these 40 students literally came from "all over" to attend this year's METS summer project. Nevertheless, they are all leaving united by one purpose—to allow the love of Christ to permeate and dominate every aspect of their lives, including their careers as health professionals.